

**RICHMOND POLICE DEPARTMENT GENERAL ORDER**

NOTE: This directive is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an employee's civil liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or case in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third party claims. Violation of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this Department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

Chapter 7	Number 19	Effective Date 12/29/10	Review Date 2013
Subject AMBER ALERT			☐ New Order ☒ Replaces G.O. 7-19 (01/02/07)
References CALEA 41.2.4, 41.2.6a, 41.2.6b, 41.2.6c, 41.2.6d, 41.2.6e, 41.2.6f VLEPSC OPR 05.01g			
 _____ Chief of Police or Designee 12/29/10 _____ Date			

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to establish criteria to follow in the event of confirmed child abduction in order to broadcast the information.

II. POLICY

- A. Time is of the essence when a child is abducted. The Richmond Regional Amber Alert plan was developed as a tool to aid in the recovery of abducted children and provides for quick notification to the public through commercial broadcast means in the event of confirmed child abduction. Under the Richmond Regional Amber Alert plan, radio stations immediately interrupt regular programming to broadcast information about a child abduction by using information provided by authorized law enforcement agencies.
- B. Recognizing that this tool can be effective, and will generate the need for high levels of law enforcement and broadcast resources, the alert must be used **only** in specified cases. The alert shall only be used where there is convincing evidence that a child has been abducted and is in danger, and it is likely that the child/or abductor is still in the area.

III. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

All employees are expected to fully comply with the guidelines and timelines set forth in this general order. Failure to comply will result in appropriate corrective action. Responsibility rests with the Division Commander to ensure that any violations of policy are investigated and appropriate training, counseling and/or disciplinary action is initiated.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. In the event of a call for service for a child abduction, the Division of Emergency Communication (DEC) will immediately dispatch the first available patrol unit, an assisting unit and a supervisor to the location of the call. When necessary, other units from available adjacent sectors will be directed to respond to the area of the incident. The first responding officer shall be responsible for completing the Missing Person Report (SP-183) and securing the most recent photograph of the child to make a missing child poster. The following procedures are to be followed by the Youth and Family Crimes Team (YFCT) detective:
1. During the hours of 0800-2300 (Monday – Friday) and 0800-1630 on weekends, the confirming Field Operations supervisor will notify the YFCT detective or the team supervisor and Watch Commander of the pertinent information upon verification from the responding patrol officer that conditions have been met to activate the AMBER ALERT.
 2. During the hours of 2300-0800 (Monday – Friday) and 1630-0800 on weekends, the confirming Field Operations supervisor will notify the YFCT Sergeant or designee and Watch Commander upon verification from the responding patrol officer that the conditions have been met to activate the AMBER ALERT.
- B. Upon the officer's arrival, he/she will ascertain information to confirm the following conditions to activate the AMBER ALERT without delay:
1. The child is under the age of 18;
 2. The law enforcement agency believes the missing child has been abducted and is in danger of serious bodily harm or death;
 3. The law enforcement agency has verified the abduction or ruled out alternative explanations;
 4. Sufficient information is available to disseminate to the public that could assist in locating the child, suspect or suspect's vehicle;
 5. Prior to making a local or regional Amber Alert, the local or regional law-enforcement officials shall confer with the Virginia State Police (**VSP**) and provide information regarding the abducted child to the Virginia State Police;
 6. While making a local or regional AMBER ALERT on the **Virginia** State Police website (***Click on AMBER ALERT, then click on Login or <https://apps.vsp.virginia.gov/amberalert/login.do>***), the person making the on-line report shall confer with the **VSP** at 1-800-VA-CHILD (822-4453) during the entry stage and provide information regarding the abducted child. The Clearinghouse will activate the Statewide Emergency Alert System as well as contact VDOT to activate highway message boards.

NOTE: The City of Richmond is jurisdictionally identified by its Origination (OR) Identifier number (VA122000) which is used as both the password and user ID

number. ***Capitalization is necessary for both the UserID and password.*** See ***Amber Alert*** Users Manual – Help Section for questions on inputting data.

7. In cases of actual child abduction and the above conditions are met, the following persons are authorized and advised to contact the Virginia State Police as soon as possible and provide the necessary information: the supervisor of the YFCT will respond to make the notification and in cases where the supervisor of the YFCT is unavailable, the Lieutenant of Major Crimes and/or the Chief of Police or designee will respond. Upon the Virginia State Police approval, the Richmond Police Department will then ***request activation of*** the local or regional Amber Alert.
8. In cases of a statewide Amber Alert, the Virginia State Police at their discretion shall be the only law enforcement official to activate Alert.
9. Activation of the Amber Alert will be as follows:
 - a. The alert will provide all pertinent data including the time and place of the incident, descriptors of the suspect and victim, and a hotline number for the public. The hotline number for the Richmond Police Department's AMBER ALERT is 1-877-244-HELP (4357).
 - b. An AMBER ALERT message will be relayed to each participating broadcaster by an agreed method(s) to include direct phone calls, faxes, and e-mails. A password will be used to validate the identity of the distributing agency.
 - c. The law enforcement agency responsible for activating the alert will issue subsequent updates on a timely basis. ***Within the Richmond Police Department***, this ***shall be*** the responsibility of the YFCT supervisor. Updates and terminations are performed online. Upon closure of the child abduction case, a final bulletin will be passed out to participating networks.

NOTE: In the event that computer systems are inoperable, the YFCT can provide forms needed for entry as well as update and termination of the Virginia AMBER ALERT.
 - d. Anticipating that an alert will trigger a flood of information, a hotline call center separate from DEC has been created to accommodate the amount of calls fielded. To activate this call center, the YFCT detective or Watch Commander will contact the YFCT supervisor or designee or the OIC of Major Crimes Unit as soon as possible. After the AMBER ALERT has commenced, the YFCT supervisor and the OIC of Major Crimes Unit will initiate the steps to activate a hotline center in the project and conference rooms of the Detective Division located on the third floor, Room 300 of the Police Headquarters. They will arrange for sworn, civilian and other city agency personnel to staff the phone lines.
10. The project and conference rooms will be outfitted with several telephones and other equipment to be utilized to enhance the investigation. The following personnel will be activated to staff the hotline center:

- a. Sworn and civilian personnel from Field and Support Services;
- b. Volunteer support staff from the Citizens Academy;
- c. Neighborhood Assistance Officers; and,
- d. Personnel from the Public Affairs Unit.

NOTE: Depending on the length of the incident, reserve officers, as determined by the OIC of the YFCT, and other personnel may be necessary to relieve the initial call takers.

11. Lead forms will be available in the room and will be utilized for each call received. All lead forms will be immediately given to the YCFT supervisor to be relayed to the field personnel on the scene.
12. The Lieutenant of the Major Crimes Unit or designee is in charge of the call center.
13. If the child is located, the Virginia State Police must be immediately notified, and the following procedures must be performed by the *same* party *or designee* responsible for notifying State Police to activate the AMBER ALERT:
 - a. Immediately send out an e-mail message on the Locator System;
 - b. Notify the Virginia Missing Children Clearinghouse;
 - c. Cancel VCIN/NCIC entry; and
 - d. Cancel AMBER ALERT BOLO (Be On the Lookout).
14. At the conclusion of the incident, the Lieutenant of the Major Crimes Unit and the supervisor of the YFCT will prepare an After-action Report regarding the operation of the AMBER ALERT system and a comprehensive evaluation of its effectiveness.
15. A copy of the After-action Report will remain with the YFCT and a copy will be forwarded through channels to the Chief of Police.

V. FORMS

(SP-183) Missing Persons Report